

Sunday Reading.

THE YOUNG PREACHER.

An Extract From Mary West's Latest and Best Book.

The youthful preacher mounted the pulpit, and after a short prayer gave out his text—"The word by wisdom knew not God." Every eye was fixed eagerly upon him, as he felt to his inmost soul, though he gazed all the while at the open page of the Bible. His face grew crimson, and then became deadly pale. Mrs. Unwin, who watched him anxiously from a side seat, thought he was going to faint, but he recovered himself, and in a voice only slightly disturbed, proceeded to divide the coming discourse into heads. Here he got along quite fluently, and taking up his first diversion—the world—he was about to picture the state of things in the first year of our Lord, when all of a sudden, his mind became an utter blank. He mechanically repeated his last words. He looked wildly at his paper of notes, hoping it would give him help. All it said was—"condition of heathen world at coming of Christ." He sought in his memory for the facts he knew well: not one could he recall. For what seemed to him an age, but was really only a couple of minutes, he stood, his knees shaking under him, while the congregation stared at him in open-eyed amazement. Covering his face with his hands he gasped out—"Oh, I have lost all my ideas!" and then he sat down in the pulpit, which was tall enough to hide him completely from view. In the merciful shelter he heard, as if in a half dream, the minister's voice speaking apologetic words; there was something about youth and inexperience, but what, he was too bewildered to understand. He heard the people moving away, and did not know how full of sympathy and of hopeful prophecies were many of them.

"Matt, my boy," said the minister, coming into the vestry, and perceiving the state of matters, "you will not be cast down by the nervous seizure. Many a most eloquent and gifted preacher has experienced the same."

Matt looked up in his guardian's face, grasped his hand, and then, turning to Mr. Masters with a haughtiness which sat oddly on his graceful person, said—"I shall preach next Sabbath evening." ***

As the important hour drew near, he became a little restless, but he never faltered in his resolve, and when presently he boldly mounted the pulpit stairs, and gave out his last Sunday's text—"The wisdom of the world"—he seemed delightfully at home. In simple and interesting language he told his unlearned hearers about the grand literature of the Greeks—about poets, historians, philosophers; ending with a eulogium of him whose conception of the soul and of wisdom were on a level with those of Scripture itself. He then spoke of the art which accompanied this literature—of the painting, the sculpture, the building—as unsurpassed and unsurpassable. He now went on to tell how the letters and arts of Greece became the study and model of Rome. "And yet," he cried, "we have seen all that this learning, all this art, all this appreciation of the sage's wisdom, the worker's skill, did not save Roman society from corruption." Matt's train of thought led naturally to the third division of his text—to Him who, hidden from the knowledge of the world, was yet its only salvation; and in words so heart-moving did the young preacher speak of the God and Father of all, as to bring tears to many eyes, and to fill the old minister's breast with a holy joy.

Almost for the first time during his sermon, Matt, sensible of the effect he was producing, looked steadily at his congregation. As he did so there flashed into his mind the remembrance of another weeping audience. It only added force to his peroration, which was an appeal to his hearers to choose heavenly wisdom.

His sermon over he hurried down the pulpit and into the vestry, much to the disappointment of the people, who longed to take a good look at him, and then to compliment him to his face.

Later in the evening, however, he had to bear some discussion of his sermon, for the minister's joy must needs find words.

"My dear lad," he said—the usually subdued light in his face changed to radiance—"you have astonished us all. There can be no doubt that an excellent gift is in you. Strive, then, to bring it as near perfection as may be; and yet always acknowledge it to be a gift, not a thing of your own achieving. And now, if you will allow me to act as your divinity tutor, I will say a word about your sermon. It was excellently thought out, and super-excellently worded; but one thing I must question, which is your view of the utter God-forsaken state of the world before the coming of Christ. I often think there is a deep truth in Augustine's words—"What is now called the Christian religion has existed among the ancients, and was not absent from the beginning of the human race."

"Sir, you are good enough to commend my preaching, but I, on my part, feel as if I could never preach again."

Four Bad Acquaintances.

Among the many friendships that are pressed upon our young people, there are four acquaintances to be specially avoided. They are a quartette always to be found around where there is anything of interest going on, and so plausible, sociable and insinuating are they that they almost deceive at times the very elect. Their names

are: "There's no Danger;" "Only this Once;" "Every Body Does it;" "By-and-bye." All four, says a reverend writer, are cheats and liars. They mean to cheat us out of heaven, and they will do it if we listen to them. The young especially should take pains to avoid such acquaintances and should resent the first overture looking to familiarity. Let them be "diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," and the quartette will look elsewhere for a victim. These spurious friends have no opportunity to impose upon one whose time and energies are wisely occupied, and whose heart is fixed upon God.

HELPING HER SISTER.

A Southern Lady who Works for Women Like Lady Aberdeen.

Miss Taylor is doing substantially for the southern states of the union what the Countess di Brazza and Lady Aberdeen are achieving for two foreign countries. But she is unknown to newspaper fame or general interest, except in a wide circle of women toilers.

A lifework may go on unassumingly under our eyes for years and attract no attention, but when a foreign takes up the same idea it is extensively advertised, Lady Aberdeen and the Countess di Brazza have done much for the interest of women bread winners in Ireland and Italy, but this philanthropic American antedated them.

She is a southern woman, brought up to know the cunning art of her neighbors and companions with the needle.

When Miss Taylor came to New York to live she was on intimate terms of friendship with many wealthy women, month after month paying small fortunes for imported articles that require fine needlework, such as costly trousseaus, baby's layettes, satin napery, even fine bed linen. The output of money was enormous in all instances. Miss Taylor saw that there was a demand that the south could supply, and she made herself the connecting link.

Whenever fine sewing was needed the order was put into Miss Taylor's hands; she wrote to her southern friends, selected and sent the materials, and the garments were forthcoming at half the expense of an imported outfit.

To the southern woman living cheaply in her own home, probably out in the country, the work was easy—for these women of the old south use "the points of fine cambric needles" with the proficiency of French nuns—and comfortable incomes were derived therefrom.

Miss Taylor used discretion and sent only to the best seamstresses and those who put intelligence and graceful refinement into the work.

Orders came rapidly, and the good needle worker who is in need is sure of finding a bit to do sooner or later. Centre pieces, doilies, handkerchiefs, all go down to Dixie to be returned to grace the fancy of fastidious northerners.

When a southern girl shows unusual aptitude, but no training for such employment, Miss Taylor raises money to perfect her as a needlewoman.

Miss Taylor is a sweet-faced woman still young, but with soft gray hair, who would be very much surprised if you told her she had done great work in providing a genteel, beautiful employment for hundreds of women.

She flies about among her friends, happy and busy with her work and her rooms—which are called "The Distaff"—are piled with letters, linen, lace and silks that are to go into the southern country, to come back coverings for millionaires' babies or some millionaire's dinner table.

TRIFLES THAT COUNT.

The Kind and Graceful Act of a Society Girl to an Early Guest.

A story was told me last week of the kind and graceful act of a Boston girl which was almost enough to change the climate of that East-windy place, as Father Taylor thought the presence of Emerson in the warmest region known to our fancy would change the climate there.

A girl had come there to visit from the country and had brought a letter to a very fashionable family, by whom she was soon after invited to a party. She was staying with quiet old people who did not realize the lateness of the hours at which an affair of that kind begins at present as compared with those observed by society in their own youth.

"If I go at half-past eight," it won't be too late, will it?" the girl, with the country habits in her mind, asked the old lady whom she was visiting.

"Oh, no," the old lady said, "and I will send Jane with you." Jane was madame's maid, as venerable and respectable and solemn as madame herself. It was about a quarter to nine when the carriage deposited the old maid and the young maiden at the door of a stately house on Commonwealth Avenue. The house door opened and they went up to the dressing-room. Not a cloak, not a wrap of any sort, only a well-trained person who took off our country girl's wrappings and disappeared.

"Oh, I dare not go down," the poor little thing said, pitifully; "I can't; I'm the very, very first." But instantly appeared an radiant white vision—the daughter of the house.

"Christine said you had come," she cried, fluttering in as if it were the very pleasantest

surprise in the world. "I'm so glad, Mamma and I were wishing we had some one to help us receive. And you didn't see papa the other day. You must come right down and see him, and be one of us."

There were tears in the country girl's eyes when she told me this little story.

"Don't you think it was the very loveliest thing?" she said. "There I was, half an hour before every one else; and they made it seem as if I was their special friend and belonged to them; and everybody was introduced to me; and don't you know I could quite fancy what it would really be to be a belle, people were so lovely."

Does it seem a little thing? I believe many shining deeds recorded in the biographies of good women have had a real sweetness in them thus this fashionable Boston beauty showed to the girl whose evening she turned from a mortification into a triumph.

Christian Duty.

Dr. Josiah Strong says: The great forces of civilization are all working in favor of combination, co-operation, organization, centralization. The churches could not resist this powerful tendency of the times, even if they tried. The very stars in their courses are fighting against existing sectarianism and denominational competition. Carlyle somewhere described the insight of genius as a "co-operation with the real tendency of the world." Those who are seeking to bring the fragments of the dismembered church of Christ into closer relations, and finally into organic union, may be said to possess this insight, and may see their triumph afar off. Dr. Washington Gladden writes: The municipal church embraces all the Christian disciples of the municipality. It is founded upon the idea that the primary business of the Christians in any community is to Christianize that community; that their obligation to co-operate for this purpose is a great deal stronger than the obligation of any of them to co-operate with other congregations in distant cities for the propagation of a few theological or ritualistic fads of their own; and that their primary Christian duty is not done until they are firmly and compactly banded together for the systematic and thorough evangelization of their own community.

Kitchen Martyrs.

Some one asked a little girl whether her mother's hair was grey. "I don't know," was the reply; "I can't see to the top of her head, and she don't ever sit down." Such a woman is always overrun with work, never a chance to rest for a single minute, who is always bustling about, anxious, burdened, her whole aim being, to all outward appearance to get her work done. Busy, busy, busy, catching the boom to whisk away an infinitesimal spot of dirt here, flourishing the dust-brush to tear down an imaginary cobweb over yonder, ripping open all the feather beds in the house to see whether some stray moth has stolen a march on her and sought rest within the downy contents, scalding up all the preserves in the cellar once a week for fear they might begin to work when she didn't know it, running up-stairs and down out to the barn and into the attic, tiring herself and every one else in the house. No woman who is a drudge in her kitchen can do justice to her family. The husband of such a wife eats his meals as quickly as possible, and goes where he can find somebody to talk to him, and with whom he can talk upon something besides bread and potatoes, and wood and water.

Crocodile Worship in India.

The late Dr. Wilson, a noted missionary when traveling in the Northwest Province, visited the Muggar Pool, or crocodile lake, which is still one of the sights near Kurachee. It was formed from the water of some hot springs within 150 square yards—"the space of a barn-yard pond"—and accommodated seventy-five monsters of all sexes, from the baby of a cubit long to the patriarch Mor Sahab, who was eleven feet long and was marked with red lead, and worshipped by the Hindoos. He says: "They seemed quite tame, as they allowed us to lay hold of their tails, and turned round at the call of the fakirs, expecting a dainty meal on some unhappy goat. We found the Mor Sahab asleep, but poked him up with our sticks. He opened his jaws like a pair of smith's bellows. He had lately had a dreadful duel with a competitor for the championship, and as the battle was a drawn one, and threatened to be renewed, he was kept apart from his fellows. They are all of the species crocodile communis. The illiterate keepers form a community of Mohammedans, more remarkable for the practice of pleasantries than austerities."

Messages of Help for the Week.

"The Lord is the strength of my life . . . therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, will sing praises unto the Lord."—Psalm 27:1-6.

"To you is the word of this salvation sent."—Acts, 13:26.

"Thou art the man."—2 Samuel, 12:7.

"I know thy words."—Revelation, 2:2.

"I know where thou dwellest."—Revelation, 2:13.

"I will take sickness away from the midst of thee."—Exodus, 23:25.

"Is my hand shortened at all? or have I no power to deliver?"—Isaiah, 5:2.

A Church Grocery.

The idea of the institutional church seems to be growing in the east. In some of the larger cities, there are churches with reading rooms, employment bureaux, soup kitchens and various other appliances to show that the church has a care for the soul. A priest of a catholic church has

opened a meat market and grocery store for the benefit of the poor and ignorant in his congregation, and for any others who may wish to take advantage of "low prices for good provisions." The profits are to go to the support of the church, which is so poor that the rector had to furnish the most of the means for the enterprise. He is enthusiastic as to its success, notwithstanding competing storekeepers sharply criticize the project.

The church grocery is an experiment which may serve to bring into closer relationship religion and business, factors which are too often found divorced in practical life, and yet conservative people will hardly regard the enterprise with favor.

Saturday Night.

On Saturday night, as we open the family paper, let us catch the odor of pine, and the glance of an autumnal leaf dropping like the spark from a forge. Let some geranium-leaf overpower the smell of printer's ink. Tell us of home. Let us know how wives ought to be attentive to their husbands, and how husbands—but never mind that. Come, O weekly visitant! into the front door with a blessing. Our week's work done, and notes paid, and accounts squared, and the hurry over, and the Sabbath near, speak you a cheerful word to the desponding, a chiding word to the wandering, a soothing word to the perplexed; and help the ten thousand of the weary and the foot-sore, and the hardly be- stead, by the camp-fires of life's great battle-field, to thank God that the seven days' march is over, and it is Saturday night. Before long our pens, and needles, and towels, and yardsticks, and saws, and pickaxes will be still. With our hands in the hands of some loved one, we will be waiting for a brighter Sunday morning than our faith saw ever. Others call that waiting the dose of life. I call it "Saturday Night."

The New Convert.

In the churches, says the Episcopal Recorder, the new convert has too little to do, to few responsibilities; while in the Salvation Army, the new soldier is expected too at once actively engage in the work of bringing other souls to the Saviour, and the fervor of his first love finds abundant occupation, in the churches he is, in a measure lost sight of, and he is allowed to go his own way. He may teach in the Sunday-school if there are any vacant classes, but farther than this until the establishment of the Christian Endeavor Society there was but little that the young convert could do, and less that rested upon him as a personal responsibility.



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